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STATE FOR EAP/MLS AND CA/OCS/ACS/EAP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM PREL](#) [CASC VM](#) [NGUYEN QUAN QUOC](#)
SUBJECT: GVN REQUESTS THAT USG TREAT NGUYEN QUOC QUAN
CASE "QUIETLY" TO FACILITATE POSITIVE OUTCOME

Ref: Hanoi 395

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A senior MFA official predicts that imprisoned AMCIT Nguyen Quoc Quan will soon be tried, after which his wife will be able to visit him in prison. He further implied that Nguyen Quoc Quan would then be released, but warned that this could not be seen to occur "under U.S. pressure." The MFA official called for U.S. restraint in demanding a release. End Summary.

2.(SBU) In an April 10 meeting, Americas Department Director General Nguyen Ba Hung told the DCM that the MFA is "fully engaged" on the case of imprisoned Amcit activist Nguyen Quoc Quan (NQO). Ba Hung said that he had spoken with relevant officials the previous day about a date for the trial, but been told that there are "technical issues" that must be resolved before a trial can be held. These, he implied, are related to strong objections to releasing NQO among certain Party and security officials. Quan's case would nonetheless be brought to court "soon," Ba Hung said, and immediately after the trial Quan's wife would be allowed to visit him in jail.

¶3. (SBU) Ba Hung noted that the GVN had recently deported three of NQO's fellow Viet Tan members who attempted to visit Quan in jail (reftel) and asked that the USG recognize this as a goodwill gesture. Viet Tan is committed to the overthrow of the current regime, making it to the GVN "what Al Qaeda is to the USG," Ba Hung said. Viet Tan sent its members to Vietnam with the explicit purpose of challenging the GVN publicly, he continued, putting Hanoi in a quandary. In this case, deportation, even if it encourages more Viet Tan members to come, was determined to be the lesser of two evils.

¶4. (SBU) Ba Hung confirmed that the GVN is seeking a "positive resolution" of Quan's case, but cannot be seen to be acting under U.S. pressure. He "strongly requested" that the USG refrain from making public "demands" for his release; this is particularly important, he stressed, given that Quan's violations of Vietnamese law were so clear. (Note: Quan was arrested when traveling under a false identity as a Cambodian national. End note.) USG cooperation in this regard is "critical" to resolving Quan's case, Ba Hung said. Ba Hung said that if Congress presses the GVN to release Quan, it will be taken to mean that the USG leadership supports Viet Tan and Viet Tan will in turn believe that if they are arrested in Vietnam the USG will get them out.

¶5. (SBU) The DCM responded that there will indeed continue to be "noise" on the Quan case; Members of Congress are upset and will continue to speak out. Ba Hung replied that Congressional action on this case would mean Quan would remain imprisoned "forever."

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